

Roberta G. Sydney
on behalf of KS Company Trust
1309 Beacon Street (Trader Joe's and others)
And
On behalf of Harvard & Beacon LLC
1319 Beacon Street (Bank of America and others)
Brookline, MA 02446

Board of Selectmen
Brookline Town Hall
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

August 12, 2016

RE: Grave concerns about the 1299 Beacon Street Proposed 40B Project

Dear Sirs:

As the longstanding owner of two adjacent properties at 1309 Beacon Street and 1319 Beacon Street, this letter is to express grave concerns about the size and scope of Raj Dhanda's proposed 40B mixed use development at 1299 Beacon Street. In short, we feel that his proposed plan is neither well designed nor suitable for the size and shape of the 1299 Beacon Street site.

HEIGHT AND SCALE OF BUILDING IS OUT OF STEP WITH NEIGHBORHOOD

A 14 story building is an enormous structure and out of scale with the Coolidge Corner neighborhood and all adjacent and nearby buildings. This proposal of a heavily massed 14 story structure that lacks articulation and set-backs is more than three times the neighborhood height of surrounding buildings towering over other buildings, none of which is greater than four stories. Both of our buildings conform to zoning code and are in keeping with the neighborhood. This proposed plan is out of scale with both.

TRAFFIC AND CONGESTION

The traffic that will be created by 108 residential units above two stories of retail with 178 parking spaces served by elevator lifts is excessively large and burdensome. The area around that site is already congested, and this proposed development would effectively create a roadblock and jam the streets as cars, trucks, and other service vehicles enter and exit the property. At certain hours, due to the extreme surface street congestion, our tenant, Trader Joes, hires off-duty Brookline Policemen to assist with traffic flow into and out of the lot at 1309 Beacon Street. The surrounding streets can not accommodate the level of additional traffic contemplated by a project of this magnitude. The proposed plan is not feasible.

NARROW SITE SHAPE CREATES ACCESS AND PARKING CHALLENGES THAT ARE POORLY ADDRESSED

The 1299 Beacon Street parcel is narrow, which creates automobile and delivery truck access and parking challenges. Instead of a traditional underground garage ramp with no mechanical parts that can fail, the developer's proposal contemplates car elevators and stacker lifts, mechanical devices that can

and do break down—which will only create more congestion and vehicular jams on Brookline Streets when these situations arise. This congestion problem will be further magnified with truck deliveries and trash pickups on the proposed 1299 Beacon Street development program, and trucks attempt to turn around on narrow one-way Sewall Avenue and back into the narrow site and station themselves on the site's far left side for these purposes.

ONE WAY SEWALL AVENUE NOT SUITABLE FOR MAGNITUDE OF BACKING UP AND TURNAROUNDS

The delivery, moving, and trash trucks will be unable to easily navigate the site access proposed by developer. This area is highly congested, and traveled by walkers with small children and strollers, along with elderly folks using canes and walkers. The multiple vehicle back-ups and traffic could create pedestrian and bike confusion, leading to accidents due to tightness of the space. Site access needs to be thoughtfully redesigned.

WIDTH AND TURNING RADIUS PROBLEMS DUE TO POOR SITE DESIGN AND INADEQUATE CIRCULATION

The narrow width and turning radius of the proposed development site traffic flow creates access and site circulation challenges, which will create backups on the proposed development site, and on Sewall, Longwood, and potentially Harvard Street. Adequate turning conditions and access for emergency vehicles, like ambulances and fire trucks to the proposed site has not been considered either. The site circulation needs to be thoughtfully redesigned.

- Moving Trucks
- Commercial/Retail Delivery Trucks
- Ambulances
- Firetrucks
- Trash storage and removal
- Fedex/UPS daily deliveries to residential customers of on line packages (Amazon, etc.)
- Pickups by Cabs, The Ride, UBER, Lyft and other ride-sharing services

INSUFFICIENT SURFACE PARKING TO MAKE THE PROGRAM WORKABLE

Developer has very limited surface parking in his program, which will create more congestion and back-ups on the streets of Brookline impairing our tenants access to the properties at 1309 and 1319 Beacon Street, and make both the residential and retail experiences difficult for his tenants.

INCONVENIENT AND NON-WORKABLE UNDERGROUND PARKING WILL IMPEDE ACCESS FOR OUR TENANTS

Parking lifts/car elevators and car stacker systems are cumbersome mechanical systems which sometimes fail. Any delays will layer cars one behind the other and onto the Brookline Streets and would create a back-up on Sewall Avenue and Longwood Avenue and potentially Harvard Street, complicating access to our sites at 1309 Beacon Street and 1319 Beacon Street. The proposed underground parking program needs to be redesigned.

POACHING PARKING AT OUR PARKING LOTS DUE TO LACK OF EASE TO PARK AT 1299 BEACON

We are also concerned that potential residents and customers of the proposed development will “poach” parking at our 1309 Beacon and 1319 Beacon Street lots since people will prefer an easy drive into a parking lot rather than wait to access a parking stacker via a car elevator system, human nature being what it is. This will overburden our very busy parking lots, and is unfair to us and to our tenants’ customers.

LOT LINE

The plans would suggest that the 1299 Beacon Street building would not be built to abut the property line at 1309 Beacon Street. We would like clarification on this point, since our 1309 Beacon building is built to the lot line abutting 1299 Beacon Street

TRASH AND DELIVERY USES POORLY PLANNED OR UNPLANNED

Being long-standing commercial property owners and operators, we understand how important it is to locate trash compactors in appropriate places, screen them well, do pest prevention for food waste, and the like. The developer seems to have omitted plans for trash, and seems to think that trucks will be able to turn around on one-way Sewall to back into a narrow delivery spot on the left rear of the site. This plan will create major backups on Sewall and Longwood and the developer should rethink and redesign these two important site needs.

LIFE SAFETY ISSUES IMPEDING SWIFT ACCESS TO LONGWOOD MEDICAL AREA

Longwood Avenue is a key axis to the Longwood Medical area. We bought out the row of parking meters from the Town of Brookline on Longwood Avenue in front of Brueggers a number of years ago and together with the town, worked to eliminate those few parking spaces, and to create a second lane of traffic. This enabled us to streamline a left turn lane into the very highly visited Trader Joe’s parking lot so that life safety vehicles could flow freely in the right lane. The traffic backup on Sewall and Longwood as cars and trucks wait to turn in to the proposed development would thwart medical vehicles that use this corridor to reach the Longwood Medical Area. Furthermore, delivery trucks routinely station themselves in the no parking area despite prominent signage, and block this right travel lane. This will likely continue due to lack of enforcement. A development of this scope at 1299 Beacon Street would further exacerbate the non-enforcement problem, and complicate and impede swift ambulance trips.

LOSS OF ANCILLARY PARKING TO TRADER JOES DUE TO THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT

Our long-standing tenant, Trader Joe’s, would lose 20 ancillary parking spaces that it has enjoyed renting from the developer and using for overflow customers for many years on the 1299 Beacon Street site.

CONCERNS ABOUT VIABILITY OF PROPOSED RETAIL SPACE CONFIGURATION

The narrow and excessively deep shape of the retail space is not typical, and will present marketing challenges for the developer. We are concerned about his ability to lease retail space with those dimensions and fear the impact of vacancy on Beacon Street or selection of substandard tenancy to fill the space. The second floor similarly shaped retail space presents even greater lease-up challenges. A different approach to building massing would help address these issues.

FLEXIBILITY OF RETAIL TO ACCOMMODATE CHANGES THROUGH THE YEARS

The plan does not adequately contemplate multiple types of retail tenancy over the life of the building. For example, at 1309 Beacon, over the years since we built it in 1985, we have leased to a wireless phone store, a game store, a furniture store, a lighting store, a bank ATM, a prepared food emporium, and now rent our retail space to Trader Joe's and 16 Handles, which sells frozen yogurt. The site design, circulation, pest control, and trash needs of each of these uses has been accommodated by our location because the site design, trash and delivery concerns, vehicle access, and circulation, were well thought out and structured. We would suggest that the proposed development has not contemplated nor planned for these issues, and suggest that the developer retool his plan and does the same, since change is a constant in retail concepts.

OTHER IMPACT ON OUR TENANTS—REQUEST DEVELOPER REVISE PLAN TO ADDRESS NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS AND THEIR USES

- Potential harm to the functionality of ATT cell tower antenna tenant on the 3rd floor at 1319 Beacon Street due to the massing and height of proposed development
- Impact on 1309 Beacon Street 2nd floor tenants rear patios and loss of enjoyment (view)
- Back-ups will create congestion and impede Bank of America ATM drive through and regular bank customers who would have difficulty accessing the parking lot and drive-through
- Complication and congestion from 1299 Beacon's potential delivery and residential moving trucks would impede the deliveries and trash and surplus food pickups (Loving Spoonfuls for homeless shelters) that occur multiple times daily for Trader Joes.

For all of these concerns, as longstanding owners of commercial property in the Town of Brookline who work hard to be good neighbors, we vehemently oppose the proposal as designed, respectfully request that the Board of Selectmen take a stand against this poorly conceived huge development project that is too large, functionally cumbersome, and presents burdensome and unsafe circulation, traffic, and parking conditions. We further suggest that the developer scale back and redesign his program to solve site access, circulation issues, and address the neighbors and the associated traffic already in existence.

Very truly yours,



Roberta G. Sydney
Trustee, KS Company Trust
and Manager, Harvard & Beacon LLC